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Letter dated 18 April 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of Iraq has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held on 9 May 2006.

I have further the honour to request that our candidature be placed on the list of candidates to be circulated to all Member States for information purposes.

(*Signed*) Hamid **Al Bayati**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 18 April 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

28 April 2006

I have the honour to attach herewith, with reference to our note verbale dated 18 April 2006, the voluntary pledges and commitments presented by the Government of Iraq for its candidature to the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held in New York on 9 May 2006 (see enclosure).

I have further the honour to request that this information be posted on the General Assembly website.

(*Signed*) Hamid **Al Bayati**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Enclosure

Aide-memoire

Iraq has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held at the United Nations General Assembly on 9 May 2006 on the following bases:

1. Iraq was forced into international isolation since 1968. The policies of the former dictatorship severed Iraq's international relations with much of the rest of the world, and inflicted decades of poverty and sanctions on the Iraqi people.

2. The previous dictator regime sponsored terrorism, violated international law, pursued and used weapons of mass destruction and sent millions of Iraqi citizens to their deaths on the battlefields in Iran and Kuwait.

3. Being a new emerging democracy and struggling very hard to build its democratic institutions under the rule of law, Iraq is keen to establish a system that ensures human rights and freedoms for all Iraqi people.

4. Being deprived of our basic human rights for more than three decades will inspire us to redouble our sincere efforts to promote and protect human rights worldwide.

5. Iraq attaches great importance to membership in the Human Rights Council, especially since it has ended the most brutal regime in modern history, which committed crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes.

6. Iraq ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in January 1970.

7. Iraq ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in January 1971.

8. Iraq ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in January 1971.

9. Iraq ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in August 1986.

10. It also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in June 1994.

11. Iraq is the first Arab country that signed the Arab Charter on Human Rights, in 1996.

12. The newly elected Iraqi Council of Representatives is in the process of ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

13. Iraqi women succeeded in guaranteeing their political rights through the inclusion in the new Permanent Constitution of their quota of no less than 25 per cent of the seats in the Council of Representatives.

14. As a manifestation of the Government's deep commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights it has established a Ministry for Human Rights, a Ministry for Women's Affairs and a Ministry for Civil Society Affairs.

15. The Government of Iraq has established inter-ministerial mechanisms such as the High National Committee for the Advancement of Women, as well as the National Committee for Child Care.

16. It is worth mentioning that the Iraqi people are determined to continue their political process. They participated in two free democratic elections and a referendum. The first was on 30 January 2005, to elect their provisional National Assembly, then on 15 October 2005 they participated in the referendum on their first Permanent Constitution since 1925. Lastly they participated in the elections of 15 December 2005 according to which they elected their Council of Representatives and their Permanent Government.

17. It is to be mentioned that human rights and democracy are the main pillars of the Iraqi Permanent Constitution. It established in Chapter Four independent associations, one of which is the Supreme Commission for Human Rights. It also stipulated in its article 2 (b) that "No law can be passed that contradicts the principles of democracy". It stated in the same article in subparagraph (c) that "No law can be passed that contradicts the rights and basic freedoms outlined in the Constitution".

18. The new Iraqi Government will exert its utmost efforts to fulfil its constitutional obligations stated in articles 14 to 44 to guarantee civil and political, social, economic and cultural rights for Iraqi people, including equality before the law without discrimination on any basis, the right to participate in public matters for all, the duty of the State to guarantee the protection of motherhood, childhood, old age and juveniles and youths, protecting the family, women and children from any kind of violence, and providing them with health services and free education.

19. According to the new Permanent Constitution all Iraqis have the right to freedom of expression, press, publishing, media, communication and distribution, freedom of assembly and peaceful protest, freedom to establish and belong to political organizations and parties.

20. The Iraqi Government is under a constitutional duty to strengthen the role of civil society groups and to support and develop them and preserve their independence in accordance with peaceful means to realize legitimate goals.

21. Iraq has recently succeeded, with the help and support of the Asian Group, to obtain the endorsement and the confidence of the Group to preside over the Third Committee at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, and the endorsement of the Group for membership in the Economic and Social Council for the term 2007-2009. In this regard Iraq will exert its utmost effort to handle those important responsibilities and be at the disposal of all Member States.

22. In pursuit of its commitments to the further promotion and protection of human rights, Iraq will take appropriate measures in respect of relevant human rights instruments and recommendations made by the Human Rights treaty bodies after considering the periodic reports submitted by Iraq.

23. The Government will build the capacity of the Ministry for Human Rights and the Ministry for Women's Affairs and the Human Rights Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as well as the Supreme Commission for Human Rights and other independent bodies established as a part of the national human rights protection system.

24. The Iraqi Council of Representatives put within its first priorities the consideration of ratifying all Optional Protocols to the human rights instruments.

25. The vital role of the United Nations in Iraq has always been welcomed by the Iraqi people, in particular its commitment to humanitarian programmes which provided a lifeline to millions of Iraqis throughout the prolonged Iraq crisis under the former regime.

26. The United Nations through its different bodies, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is providing the Government and the people of Iraq with the technical assistance needed for building capacities in the promotion and protection of human rights.